



Interethnic Coexistence
in European Cities

NEWSLETTER

ICEC Newsletter No 3: Speaking one language? Collaborating with policymakers and practitioners

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Welcome to our third ICEC newsletter! This newsletter corresponds to our third ICEC research year. Since the last newsletter, we have made major steps and are happy to be able to update you on our latest work. As well as reports on our fieldwork and experiences with the concept of “space of encounter”, you can expect an insight into the policy workshop that took place in September 2015 in Stockholm. For the first time, the ICEC team invited a larger round of policymakers and stakeholders from Sweden, The Netherlands and Austria to discuss and develop a common understanding of living together in diverse neighbourhoods. Constructive feedback, critical thoughts and fresh ideas are now part of our ongoing analysis to achieve one major aim: Developing results that are of value both to policymakers and for academia.

Season's greetings,
The ICEC Team



Neighbourhood case study site and ICEC meeting location: Ragsved, Stockholm (Picture: M. Franz)

ICEC Knowledge

Do I feel attached to this place?

Place attachment means a sense of belonging, a place where you enjoy living or spending your time. Urban design of open public space can play an important role in this respect as it can promote a resident or user's identification with a place or space. This was one of the points discussed among practitioners and researchers at the ICEC workshop in Stockholm. Some participants argued that public space needs to be reinvented to promote place attachment: Some of the public spaces are no longer used because residents' needs have changed. Read more on our *enhanced online newsletter*.

ICEC speaks policies: Engaging and cooperating with practitioners

More than 45 practitioners, policymakers, politicians, project managers, and researchers met in Rågsved, Stockholm on 16th October 2015 for a joint workshop to address some of the following questions:

- What makes people meet across age, gender, and ethnicity at the neighbourhood level?
- What initiatives are successful in making these encounters come about?
- How does participation in local integration measures and initiatives impact neighbourhood belonging of local residents?
- What can policymakers learn from that?

Mr. Gustav Hemming, Stockholm County Counselor, said in his inaugural speech:

"That is why this workshop is so important for us in the county council, now when we are going to develop the forthcoming regional development plan for the Stockholm region."

The county council commissioner was not the only elected participant at the workshops. The presidents or vice presidents of the City District Boards of Enskede-Årsta-vantör (Rågsved) and of Skärholmen were also there. The workshop included preliminary results from the three city research teams in Amsterdam, Stockholm, and Vienna and practical experience of running projects in the neighbourhoods, as well as discussion sessions with participants about the three key dimensions in the ICEC project, namely **social embeddedness**, **co-responsibility** and **place attachment**.

Some preliminary findings

The point of departure for the workshop included preliminary results from the three city research teams in Amsterdam, Stockholm, and Vienna. With three neighbourhoods in three cities and two local initiatives in each neighbourhood, it comes as no surprise that the findings point in more than one direction.

In **Vienna**, while findings do indicate an impact on social embeddedness from participation in local measures, there were also some surprising findings. For instance, the neighbourhood may not always be as important for residents as originally thought. Rather, social ties within ethnic communities across the city or contacts based on education and social class do. Residents live side-by-side, however conflict free existence appears to be due



Thematic discussions with practitioners, policymakers and researchers (Picture: M. Franz)

ICEC Knowledge

What is social embeddedness?

Social embeddedness refers to the resident's social ties, including the depth and frequency of contacts with others. Different characteristics such as gender, age and ethnicity are also taken into account when we analyse social embeddedness. One important question in this respect is how to create meeting-places that function as bridges between different groups? Planning departments should play a more active role in designing low-threshold 'spaces of encounter' which promote the coming together of people on an everyday basis. Read more on our *enhanced online newsletter*.

to avoiding social contact. Thus, if the policy aim is interethnic co-existence, there is need for efforts to go from the current conflict-free situation to create neighbourhood attachment and co-responsibility.

In **Amsterdam**, findings indicate that inward and outward group formations in the neighbourhoods also depend on most dominant group(s) in the neighbourhood. There are long term ethnic Dutch residents voicing a sense of bereavement and general sense of abandonment, while there are also diversity seekers among the ethnic Dutch. Among the non-ethnic Dutch diversity is appreciated as a concentration of their own group or non-ethnic Dutch but not diversity per se. In policy terms, the Amsterdam findings indicate that establishing an inclusive sense of 'we' is both labour-intensive and a continuous process.

Participation can intensify social relations in the neighbourhood, but there are both positive and negative ways, depending on whether bridging or bonding forces prevail.

In **Stockholm**, a recurrent finding is related to how residents respond to the neighbourhood's reputation in terms of place attachment and social embeddedness. While local initiatives aim to bridge gaps between different groups, and do so successfully, the neighbourhood reputation is one reason for strengthened bonds and social ties among citizens in the neighbourhood itself. The "reputation" thus affects the degree of place attachment and residents react differently to it: proactively through getting involved; passively mainly due to them living in the neighbourhood due to financial conditions; or they disagree with reference to own personal experience.

Read more about crucial policy related questions on our **enhanced online newsletter**.

Practitioners' perspectives and experiences

So what can be done to bring people together? Julia Guidardi-Hoog, Municipality Department in Vienna for the Coordination of Urban Renewal Offices, stressed the long-term perspective:

"It's all about identity. We need a long-term plan. Because how we live will change, our cities change. And we need an overall strategy of how to live together side-by-side, "old" Austrians and new refugees."

Mia Stavling, head of Öppna Förskolan in Rågsved, also discussed the long-term perspectives, but from a more practical point of view:

"Language is a barrier. I spend a lot of time meeting people to explain what an open preschool is. There is thus a need to interact with all residents so they all know they are welcome."

Read more about the discussions and what representatives of the city authorities had to say online.

Want to know more?

If you want more information about any of the topics in this newsletter, there is an *extended version available online*. Look out for the links throughout the newsletter for the extra online content.



Local stakeholders and individual initiators tell their local knowledge (Picture: M. Franz)

ICEC introduces: Carlos Rojas moderating the first ICEC policy workshop

Carlos is a 32-year old Stockholmian, born and raised in Vårby gård, a southern suburb of Stockholm. Currently running his own research and consultancy company, Carlos helps different stakeholders to engage in genuine dialogue with citizens in neighbourhoods across Sweden. One of his specialities is the **million programme neighbourhoods**.

This is a field he is particularly qualified to address as he grew up in one of them. These neighbourhoods, part of the million programme, were built between 1965 and 1975 in most cities and towns all over the country. Their purpose was to address the lack of housing at the time.

Some of these neighbourhoods today face huge challenges both in terms of a needs for reinvestment in the physical urban design and upkeep, as well as a relatively significant clustering of poor households. A number of neighbourhoods have also received many refugees coming to Sweden over the last half century, thus adding to their diversity. Both Rinkeby and Skärholmen belong to the million programme neighbourhoods, while Rågsved was built in the late 1950s.

Why are you, Carlos, so interested in the million programme neighbourhoods?

As a teenager, I started noticing that society's perception of the areas that I had spent my life in were very different to the perception we who had the personal experience had of them.

This raised my interest in investigating how things really were, prejudice and rumours aside. And since then most of my research, since eight years also developed from journalism to deeper studies with Miklo, aim to bring clarity to how things really are, struggling against the reified perceptions of society as a whole but also from experts, politicians, journalists and researchers.

Tell us about some of your projects?

Right now I am involved in the regional planning of Stockholm regarding social resilience and also since two years of service in a northern municipality called Piteå, that back in 2013 decided to increase their influx of migrants, regardless of how the future would develop. It is really interesting to be a part of as it is obvious that their clear vision of the future - assuming two years ago that the levels of refugees seeking asylum in Sweden would probably rise - are now helping them a lot. They were prepared for a trebling of migrants from abroad and aren't experiencing the same stress as other Swedish municipalities. Instead of hoping the influx will diminish they are just happy that they didn't have to make more effort to make them come to Piteå.

You moderated the workshop in Rågsved. What do you consider to be the main achievement of that workshop?

The possibility to collaborate in developing ideas and insights cross-sectionally, in the mixed group that was present and sharing ideas. It was a good dynamic discussion and participation by all the different type of participants was good.

This was our first ICEC policy workshop. For the second one in Vienna, what would you like to focus more on?

With a bit more time for discussions we can develop more ideas and insights and more answers on the questions addressed by the ICEC project. One way to do it is to let the participants themselves form questions that develop when taking part of the research findings, and form their own stances. Also more diversity among participants, even though it was pretty diverse, we lacked representatives from the local communities we were discussing. If we manage to attract more representatives from the local communities, there will be even more dynamic discussions.

What do you bring with you from your other projects that you think could benefit the ICEC work?

Piteå, as I mentioned, is very interesting as they are and have been proactive in a way that makes life much easier for their practitioners and politicians. Also, our studies made throughout the years about Stockholm's million programme can give pretty clear



Carlos Rojas (Picture: Miklo.se)

indications on the levels of neighbourhood belonging and willingness to co-exist that different areas show in both quantitative and qualitative studies.

ICEC explores: Rågsved, Stockholm at a glance

During the 1950s and early 1960s, Rågsved was mostly inhabited by in-movers, especially then well-paid blue-collars, from the inner city, particularly from the now-gentrified Södermalm with its bad housing conditions at that time, and Rågsved was then considered as a step upwards in the residence career in the late 1950s.

Rågsved is not a so-called *Million Home Area* as it predates the programme. While Rågsved was built, an industrialisation style dominated the construction, and this is visible at the houses located to the north of the subway and was also in many ways considered as a Million Home Programme district where modernism made its mark, with large housing blocks. Even here the image of unemployment, social benefits, drugs, (youth) alienation and low education level was established.

The Million Home Programme changed the social structure of Rågsved too and the new inhabitants consisted to a large degree of economically and socially disadvantaged Swedish people and immigrants that changed the image of Rågsved. Some of those interviewed were not satisfied with the situation today and say they visit the centre only for shopping and travelling somewhere else with the subway. How representative those kinds of people are will be checked in the complementary and finalising interviews.

Despite the high proportion of foreign-born people, the number is lower than in the other two neighbourhoods. Many of the social problems might be a consequence of the bad reputation from the 1980s and much is now done to reverse this image and even to find a way out of the problems.

ICEC data collection: Notes from the field

The ICEC city teams are continuing their fieldwork in the selected areas. In three neighbourhoods per city, they are interviewing local residents and practitioners about their experience of the neighbourhood and neighbourhood diversity, and their sense of neighbourhood belonging. Throughout, the focus is on the ability of selected neighbourhood interventions to engage and empower residents.

In **Amsterdam**, the research team has almost completed fieldwork in the first two study areas (Van der Pekbuurt and Slottermeer-Noordoost) and is now conducting interviews and participating in activities in the third neighbourhood (H-buurt). In H-buurt we visited a newly-opened neighbourhood centre which provides space and resources for residents to create their own activities. The result is a colourful mix of activities and participants. For example, on Mondays and Fridays there is a makeshift hair salon, while other participants are busy cooking, sewing, or just sitting and chatting.

The **Stockholm** team is also busy doing interviews in their third case study neighbourhood, Skärholmen. An emerging picture from the ongoing fieldwork is that while many residents feel at home in their neighbourhood, they also experience exclusion in other parts of Stockholm. Rejecting the negative image of their neighbourhood and working together to improve it were thus found to be motivations for taking part in neighbourhood activities among some residents.



The commercial centre of Rågsved (Picture: M. Franz)

The **Vienna** team finished fieldwork in the second neighbourhood (Gumpendorf) in July, having interviewed 43 residents and 5 stakeholders. Fieldwork in the third neighbourhood (Breitensee) was also concluded in October and involved interviews with 40 residents and 5 stakeholders. A particular highlight in this neighbourhood was the community garden in Matznergarten, one of the studied interventions. In this garden, residents came together to organise cooking workshops and other activities in order to foster interethnic co-existence.

ICEC Knowledge

Co-responsibility means different things in different national contexts: while in Austria it refers to residents and practitioners working together, in the Netherlands it implies handing over responsibility for maintenance to residents and thereby reducing the government's responsibility. In addition, there are different approaches to promoting co-responsibility: some are based on bottom-up organisation, while others follow a top-down strategy. The advantages and disadvantages of both approaches were discussed in the workshop. [Read more online.](#)

Inside ICEC: Learning from interviews in spaces of encounter in Vienna

Our main space of encounter in the Breitensee neighbourhood was Matznerpark. We held interviews in the summer of 2015, the hottest in Vienna since records began. Thus, in the evening the park was highly frequented by a diverse crowd of people. Initially, we chose the fenced-off dog area for initiating contacts with potential interviewees. This space offered several advantages: many dog owners were there for a longer period of time and often got bored, which made them generally more open to communication as well as full interviews. Dog owners also provided a socio-economic and socio-demographic cross-section of the Breitensee population, although people with a migration background and especially Muslims were underrepresented.

After some time it became clear that Matznerpark visitors were a more or less stable group. Thus, to broaden the sample we decided to also approach visitors to the Ludwig-Zatzka-Park. In this park, which consists of a small green area and adjacent playground near Breitensee railway station, we found specific but diverse groups of people: alcoholics, unemployed, 'problem' youngsters, but also 'average citizens' waiting for the suburban railway.

[Read more about this story online.](#)



Julia Dahlvik presenting (Picture: M. Franz)

Meet the ICEC team

The team members of the ICEC project have been very actively disseminating their findings at international conferences in the last months and will continue in the next months. Julia Dahlvik and Myrte Hoekstra presented a comparative paper at the conference **“Migrants in the city” at the University of Sheffield (UK)** in October 2015, focusing on the findings from the first neighbourhood case studies in Amsterdam and Vienna. Also in October, Yvonne Franz and Julia Dahlvik presented findings on the Viennese ULL ‘Matznergarten’ at the conference on **“Green Urban Commons” in Vienna**. The presentation focused on the potential of community gardens as spaces of encounter and co-responsibly organised activities in super-diverse neighbourhoods. In December 2015, Myrte Hoekstra will be presenting at a conference

on **“Migration and New Local Governance” at the University of Poitiers, France**. The paper, written with Daniel Rauhut and Josef Kohlbacher, includes a comparison of city-specific understandings of diversity and integration policy in Amsterdam, Vienna and Stockholm. In spring, Fenne Pinkster and Myrte Hoekstra will host a session at the **Annual Conference of the AAG in San Francisco** on **“Experiencing difference: Contestations and negotiations over place in super-diverse neighbourhoods”**; they will also present findings from their fieldwork in Van der Pekbuurt, Amsterdam.

For ICEC readings and latest publications, see: icecproject.com/publications/

JPI Urban Europe project videos

JPI Urban Europe has produced short videos giving an introduction to the projects they fund, and ICEC is, of course, one of them.

To watch the video, visit our homepage.



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